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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7623rd meeting
Tuesday, 16 February 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Yoshikawa
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2233 (2015) (S/2016/77)

Ninth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2016/87)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2233 (2015) (S/2016/77)

Ninth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2016/87)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/77, which contains the second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2233 (2015), as well as to document S/2016/87, which contains the ninth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2107 (2013).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: In the past reporting period, the heroic people of Iraq have been steadily gaining ground against the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is gradually losing its appeal to the disenfranchised population. The liberation and holding of Beiji, Sinjar and, most of all, Ramadi, and the continuing clearance of the surrounding areas of ISIL fighters, have instilled in the people of Iraq the hope that the country can and will be liberated from ISIL. It has also documented how important it is to rely on local and tribal fighters from areas under ISIL control to participate in the liberation and take responsibility for the security of their cities and provinces.

This success also demonstrates the increasingly resolute and effective support provided to Iraq by the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL in its fight against ISIL and provides lessons for preparations for the liberation of the remaining territories, most notably of Mosul. It serves as an encouragement to other members of the international community to assist Iraq in combating ISIL.

The terrorist organization ISIL, with its radical ideology and policies of sectarianism, violent extremism and terrorism, constitutes a global and unprecedented threat to international peace and security. Combating ISIL by all means is a priority of the whole international community, and Member States are called upon to redouble and coordinate their efforts.

Following the 18 December 2015 meeting of the Security Council (see S/PV.7589), bilateral and diplomatic efforts, assisted by international partners and the United Nations, continue to resolve the issues of the presence of Turkish forces in Camp Bashiqa, so far without mutually acceptable results. I reiterate the calls made by the Secretary-General for a solution in line with the Charter of the United Nations and in full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. I also urge both sides to take steps that will enable the deepening of cooperation in the field of security and continuous support to Iraq in fighting ISIL, based on consultations with and full consent of the Government of Iraq.

Regardless of those successes, ISIL remains a formidable and determined enemy that constantly adjusts its tactics and attack patterns, taking into account also the developments in Syria. ISIL cannot be defeated by military means alone without addressing the root causes of violence and the underlying ideology; otherwise their effect will not be sustainable and lasting. Military victories need to be complemented by massive stabilization and rehabilitation efforts that prioritize and allow for the safe return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their towns of origin. Simultaneously, Iraqis must prioritize political and community reconciliation.

The lack of progress in implementing the national political agreement reflects the absence of political consensus and the continued pursuit of partisan interests. The stability, security and unity of Iraq hinge on an effective and inclusive political system and equality in decision-making at the federal and local levels. Tangible solutions to prevent political and

sectarian exclusion have to include amendments to or the adoption of priority legislation, followed by swift implementation, such as the justice and accountability law, the national guard law and the general amnesty law. Efforts by Sunni political forces and their leaders to unify their stance on national reconciliation, effective federalization and decentralization, and how to more successfully counter ISIL are equally necessary. I welcome such steps provided they add to internal consolidation and not divisions, while urging Sunni leaders and forces to continue such activities in the most inclusive manner possible.

In early January, lethal attacks in Baghdad and in Muqdadiya, in Diyala governorate, perpetrated by ISIL and revenge violence by rogue militia elements and criminal groups prompted concern that the nation was again continuing down a spiralling trajectory of sectarian violence, compounded by internal political divisions along sectarian lines, as well as regional tensions and context. Those attacks were an attempt to further stoke sectarian tensions and political polarization in Iraq and weaken the unity of Iraq and its people. They also highlighted the urgent need to reach progress in intercommunal relations and swiftly restore State and local authority, the rule of law, good governance, justice and the provision of services to the newly liberated areas and exert firm control over all fighters and weapons. Security sector reform addressing the issue of uncontrolled armed groups and their presence in cities, notably in liberated areas, is a priority.

Stabilization in liberated areas and the safe return of IDPs are of enormous political importance. I am happy to report that the stabilization phase of Tikrit is almost complete. Overall, the Government has given very high priority to returns and so far, more than 500,000 displaced Iraqis have returned to their home communities. The Government expects that up to 900,000 will return in 2016.

There are, however, a number of complicated factors impacting the pace of returns. These include a huge number of improvised explosive devices that have been laid by ISIL and that must be removed before populations can return home, as well as devastating destruction to infrastructure and homes. We are seeing this right now in Ramadi. I call on Iraq's regional and international partners to enhance their support to the Government of Iraq's efforts to hold and stabilize areas retaken from ISIL. Those efforts also ought to focus on building the capacity of local security and police forces through training and material support.

Persistent political polarization and divisions continue to hamper Prime Minister Al Abadi's ability to advance the reform agenda, including in decentralization and fighting corruption. The Prime Minister's recent announcement aimed at establishing a more professional Cabinet with members selected on merit, and not on sectarian or political quotas, should be accompanied by an accelerated implementation of a genuine political, security and economic reform package. The complex and deepening set of challenges before the country and its people requires that the political blocks finally work together in support of comprehensive and profound reforms, as they did when adopting the budget for 2016.

Iraq's persistent and rapidly deepening fiscal crisis and growing budget deficit, compounded by the security and humanitarian situation and drastic decline in global oil prices, has almost halved the State's planned income since then, and the Kurdistan region faces at least a situation as grave as that of Baghdad. Fiscal challenges are also likely to impact the fight against ISIL, as a significant number of fighters, notably the Peshmerga, have not received salaries for several months.

I am mindful that, if left unaddressed, such an unsustainable situation may seriously undermine the renewed morale of pro-Government forces and the confidence of the people — including youth, communities, minorities and IDPs — that they can have a future in Iraq. And while the Governments in Baghdad and Erbil must rapidly prioritize and take full ownership over the State finances and reforms, I urge the international community to assist Iraq in overcoming those difficulties through increased technical support and funding, including through lending by international and regional financial institutions. Genuine economic reforms by the governments in Baghdad and Erbil could pave the way for such financial and budgetary support.

The severe economic crisis is having a sobering effect on the relationship between Baghdad and Erbil, with both sides showing renewed will to work together, militarily and economically, including on reforms. I am therefore hopeful that realism and pragmatism will prevail and help boost efforts in ensuring the stability and prosperity of Iraq, including the Kurdistan region, needed to continue jointly the existential fight against ISIL.

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq is highly complex and is expected to widen and worsen this year. Today, not only 3.3 million IDPs, but altogether some 10 million Iraqis — almost one-third of the population — urgently require some form of humanitarian assistance. Let us not forget that without the necessary support, today's IDPs will become tomorrow's refugees. The humanitarian needs are now so great they far outstrip national capacities. The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government simply do not have the resources to keep providing assistance, not because of a lack of will or a reluctance to assume responsibility, but because of the grave economic and fiscal situation.

On 31 January, the United Nations, jointly with the Government of Iraq, launched a humanitarian appeal requesting $861 million to help ensure that the most vulnerable people receive the assistance they need. On top of that, a potential catastrophe from the Mosul developmentam adds new grave challenges and pressures and requires urgent action by both the Government of Iraq and the international community, including the United Nations, as well as public awareness campaigns and disaster-response plans, including the evacuation of the affected population in case of such catastrophe.

Allow me to turn now to the ninth report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/87) on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. As part of the Government of Iraq's reform programme, the Council of Ministers agreed on the distribution of the files formerly under the mandate of the Ministry of Human Rights, deciding to transfer the technical overview of the missing Kuwaiti persons file to the Ministry of Defence. While this is a positive step, the Government of Iraq must now implement the decision and allocate the financial resources needed to ensure that the work continues unabated.

Cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait continues to reach new heights. In December, during the fifth session of the Iraq-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Committee, the parties signed agreements covering several fields, including youth and sports, inspection and control, and communications. Nonetheless, the Government of Iraq continues to be under its international obligation to ensure progress.

The United Nations continues to operate in difficult and often dangerous conditions in Iraq. It is with deep regret that I have to inform the members of the Security Council that yesterday we received the news that the staff member of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq who was abducted in Diyala in April 2015, Mr. Al-Kaissy, has been found dead. I am deeply shocked and saddened by this news. I strongly urge the Iraqi authorities to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into this abduction and murder immediately and to hold the perpetrators accountable. I would like to remind the Government of Iraq that the national authorities bear full responsibility for serving justice in this case, just as they do for safeguarding and protecting all United Nations personnel serving in the country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his informative briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating Venezuela on its accession to the presidency of the Council this month and by thanking the Venezuelan delegation for its considerable efforts and transparency in organizing the Council's work in February. I would also like to thank the delegation of Uruguay for its work in presiding over the Council last month. I take this opportunity to congratulate our sister nation Egypt on its membership of the Council. We wish the Egyptian Ambassador and his team every success in their work in service of Egypt and the Arab world. I also congratulate Japan, Senegal, Ukraine and Uruguay on their election to the Security Council.

The Iraqi delegation would like to express its great appreciation for the efforts of the Jordanian delegation in representing the Group of Arab States in the Security Council during the past two years. I am heartily grateful to Mrs. Kawar and her team for their work on behalf of the Arab region, which is currently going through difficult times. And I thank Chad, Chile, Lithuania and Nigeria for their efforts on the Security Council over the past two years.

We offer our sincere condolences to the Egyptian delegation, and indeed to all the staff of the United Nations, on the passing of former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI),

and his team for their efforts. They have rendered great service to Iraq at a very difficult time.

The war against international terrorism — which includes combatants from more than 100 countries — together with the fall in oil prices, the rebuilding of infrastructure and the restoration of basic services for the displaced in the cities that have been liberated from Da'esh, all represent significant challenges for Iraq. Iraq now has some 3 million internally displaced persons who left the towns occupied by Da'esh in the wake of its acts of terrorism and are now in urgent need of assistance from the international community and international organizations if they are to be able to deal with these problems and their consequences. What is especially needed is the provision of essential services for the refugees and the displaced, including women, children and ethnic and religious minorities, as well as the establishment of conditions that will enable them to return home and ensure their safety in the liberated towns.

We are grateful to the United States and the countries that have committed to helping to finance stabilization programmes for Iraq's liberated regions. On behalf of my delegation, I would also like to thank all the member States of the international coalition, the countries of the European Union and other nations that are not members of the coalition for the part they have played in fighting terrorism and for the military and logistical support they have given the Iraqi security forces, while respecting Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. They have coordinated their action with the security forces and have avoided bombing civilian targets, in accordance with the message we delivered through the Security Council in 2014. We would also like to thank the Security Council for urging the international community to strengthen its assistance to the Government of Iraq in its efforts to combat Da'esh and the armed groups affiliated with it.

We would first like to ask the Security Council to encourage countries to implement resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015), including those provisions having to do with border controls and halting the flow of fighters, as well as those related to the prevention of access to arms, the Internet and so forth. We also request that the Council demand that Turkey withdraw the troops whose presence is a violation of Iraqi sovereignty. The Government of Iraq was not consulted about their entry into Iraq, which is a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Government of Iraq pays tribute to the efforts and the bravery of the Iraqi security forces and the tribal combatants who are fighting together with them under a unified central command. We pay tribute to them for their military successes, including the retaking of the western, northern and southern areas of the city of Ramadi, and their continued and unflagging efforts to liberate the eastern part of the city in order to be able to return those displaced from it. These joint and united forces continue to labour to fully retake the city captured by Da'esh.

Iraq has continued to work to strengthen its ties to other Arab countries and its neighbours, particularly Kuwait, Jordan, Iran and Saudi Arabia. I should also point out that we are in constant contact with the Syrian Government. Iraq remains as fully engaged on the judicial as on the military front. It is committed to achieving progress on the Kuwaiti issue. The Secretary responsible for this case, along with all of his employees, has been transferred to the Ministry of Defence. All the archives, bodies, equipment, databases and files have also been transferred to the Ministry of Defence along with him in order to guarantee that the work on this issue continues. It was also done to guarantee the continuation of hearings in order to obtain information on the disappeared Kuwaitis and those disappeared from third-party countries.

On 10 January, the Committee met with Mr. Falah Daham, a witness from the Doha region in Kuwait, in order to collect the information he possessed. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has continued to publish announcements in the local press, without ceasing, in order to encourage citizens to come forth and provide any information they may have on the location of mass graves, archives or any other Kuwaiti property.

Kuwait and Iraq are in constant communications in order to update the project of delineating the border. The most recent event in that context was the high-level meeting of the Iraq-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Committee, which was held in Kuwait in December 2015. The participants in the meeting addressed a number of issues, especially those of common interest economically, politically, socially and environmentally.

Iraq is faithful to its commitments, especially with regard to the protection of the residents of Camp

Hurriya. The Iraqi Council of Ministers is responsible for working with Ms. Jane Holl Lute, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Relocation of Camp Hurriya Residents Outside of Iraq, who is responsible for their assistance. She has visited a number of different countries to convince them to take in and host the residents of the Camp. We are working with the Special Adviser to find a permanent situation for the residents of the Camp.

Finally, we would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš and his team for their assistance and for their very helpful advice provided to the Iraqi Government as well as for the UNAMI activities in Iraq to create a unified, stable Iraq without terrorists.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.